

**AGENDA
ITEM
NO. 9.a**

LAFCO *of Monterey County*

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
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KATE McKENNA, AICP
Executive Officer

DATE: April 26, 2010

TO: Chair and Members of the Formation Commission

FROM: Kate McKenna, AICP, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT: PRESENTATION BY ASSOCIATION OF MONTEREY BAY AREA
GOVERNMENTS ON THE REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PLAN AND THE
REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Commission receive a presentation from the AMBAG Principal Planner.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT:

Overview

AMBAG Principal Planner Randy Deshazo will provide the Commission with an introduction to two regional planning processes. Mr. Deshazo will also explain their relationships and the role of LAFCO as a partner in developing both plans.

Blueprint Plan and LAFCO's Role

AMBAG is preparing a regional Blueprint Plan. The focus is on improved mobility, accessibility and coordinated transportation and local land use in the 3-County Monterey Bay region. It is funded by a Caltrans grant, and input has been provided by local partners, including LAFCO.

LAFCO has no statutory role in the Blueprint regional planning process. However, our staff does provide input as a member of a technical advisory committee, and the Commission will have opportunities to comment during the public review process. Attachment 1 provides general information about the Blueprint concept and process.

Sustainable Communities Strategy and LAFCO's Role

In 2008, the State adopted California's Sustainable Communities Planning Act (SB 375, Steinberg) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Air Resources Board will provide our region with reduction targets by September 2010. These targets will be used by AMBAG to develop the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Strategy will coordinate land use, transportation and housing development to achieve the target reduction. It will be a required component of AMBAG's Regional Transportation Plan, a 20-year federally required transportation planning document with additional content mandated by the State. Attachment 2 provides general information about the SB 375 implementation process.

LAFCO has statutory responsibilities in this planning process: Spheres of Influence must be considered in the preparation of AMBAG's Sustainable Development Communities Strategy.

Next Steps

The draft Blueprint is still undergoing administrative review by AMBAG and its partners. AMBAG plans to release the draft Blueprint for public review later this Spring. The draft plan will be provided to the Commission for official review and comments.

AMBAG has initiated the preparation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy. The first public meeting to discuss the technical methodology for identifying greenhouse gas emissions is set for May 5. Development of the Strategy will reflect the air emission reduction goals to be set by the Air Resources Board. The Commission will have opportunities to review and comment on the draft Strategy and ensure the consideration of LAFCO's Sphere of Influence boundaries. AMBAG will fold the Strategy into its Regional Transportation Plan in 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,



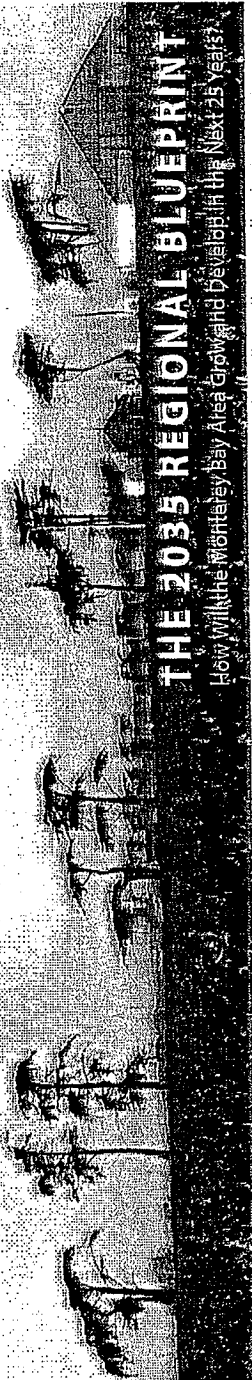
Kate McKenna, AICP
Executive Officer

cc: Randy Deshazo, Principal Planner, AMBAG

Attachments:

1. AMBAG's Blueprint Brochure.
2. The Basics of SB 375: Transportation, Housing and Greenhouse Gases.

ENVISIONING THE MONTEREY BAY AREA



THE 2035 REGIONAL BLUEPRINT

How Will the Monterey Bay Area Grow and Develop in the Next 25 Years?

Why do we need a Monterey Bay Area Blueprint?

Our region's population is growing and getting older. We have to drive further than ever to reach jobs. Our financial resources are shrinking, leaving us to do more with less. We cannot tackle these fundamental changes on our own. More than ever, our cities and towns are interdependent and as such our future quality of life will depend on more coordination of resources throughout the Monterey Bay Area. Working together to develop a common vision will ultimately give the region the competitive edge it needs for the next 25 years.

The common vision, the Blueprint, will lay the foundation for how we as a region decide to improve choices for transportation, housing and employment while preserving agricultural lands and conservation areas. A successful vision will improve our quality of life while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

The Monterey Bay Area is a unique area in California. The rugged shore and adjacent fertile valleys drive our leading tourism and agriculture sectors, while our diverse population fosters a highly creative environment for research and education. The vision of how we will live in 2035 will shape our ultimate prosperity.

How can I become involved in the Blueprint?

- Public Workshops will be held in late Spring and Summer of 2010
- For the latest information please visit: <http://www.ambag.org/planning/blueprint>
- Become a fan of AMBAG on Facebook!
- Contact Linda Meckel, lmeckel@ambag.org, (831) 264-5084



AMBAG
P (831) 863-3750
F (831) 863-3755
www.ambag.org

I want to be on the Blueprint mailing list!



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What will be the trade-offs?

Limited resources force us to make trade-offs, but also provide an opportunity for innovation and new found prosperity in breaking from a traditional "business as usual" approach.

The choices we make will either lead to more congested roads or to more transportation choices, to either more sprawling housing developments or more tight knit communities that can support recreation, shopping and other activities. Do we want more roadside big box developments or do we want economically vibrant town centers?

What would you trade to improve your quality of life? Would you live closer to your job? Would you invest more in sustainable transportation? Would you pay more for services to continue living in the manner in which we currently do? What is your choice? Where and how do you want to live, work and play? How will you get from here to there?

Join us in Envisioning the Monterey Bay Area

Tell us what you think are the most important issues to consider in thinking about the way we will live in decades to come.

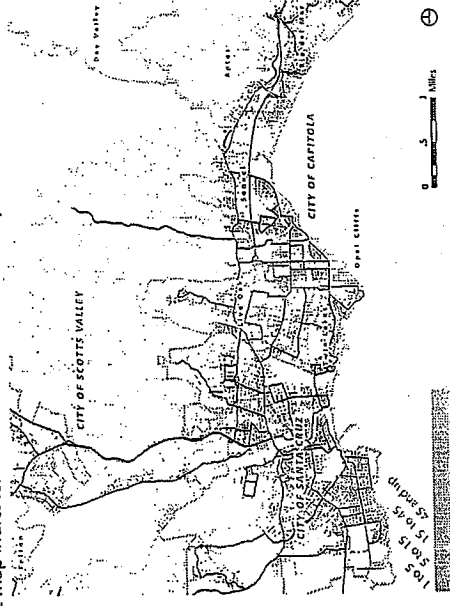
Envisioning the Monterey Bay Area is a visioning effort that brings together the public and planners to discuss the most important issues facing the region over the long run. How should we plan for an older population? Can we reverse the trend of longer home-to-work trips?

Beginning in Spring/Summer of 2010 and unfolding under the following four or so months, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments will be holding a series of workshops to gather your input into the development of a regional vision for future growth.

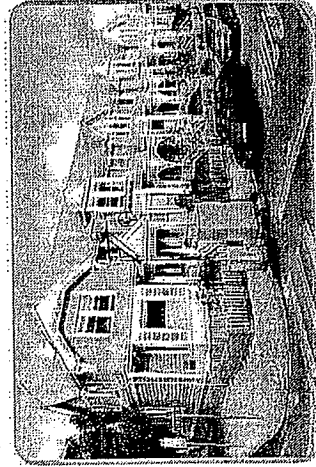
This effort will help in shaping future housing and transportation policy, and will inform future plan updates by local jurisdictions. We are also facing a state mandate to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions – this effort will help us identify how we can do that.

Where can we easily bike & walk?

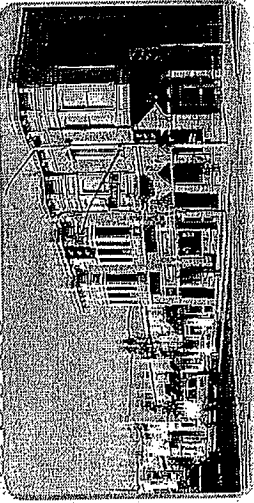
The map indicates how walkable our cities already are.



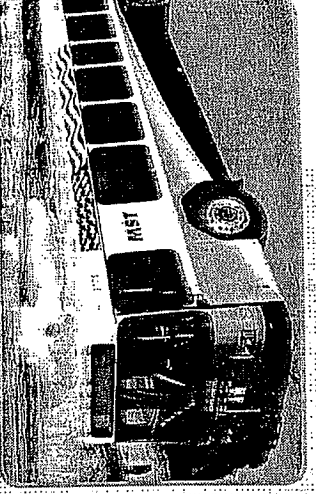
Live?



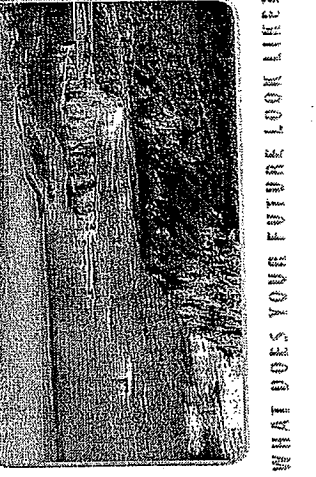
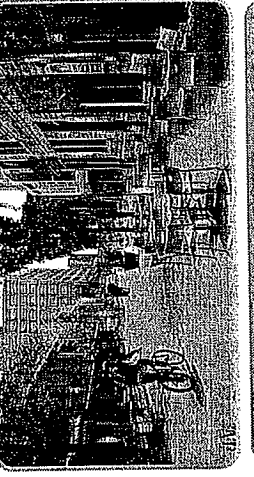
Work?



Move?



Play?



WHAT DOES YOUR FUTURE LOOK LIKE?



The Basics of SB 375: Transportation, Housing and Greenhouse Gases

About the Institute for Local Government

The Institute for Local Government is the nonprofit research affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. ILG's mission is to promote well-informed, ethical, inclusive, effective and responsive local government in California through innovative (state-of-the-art) resources, tools and programs.

The Institute's Current Program Areas Include:

- Climate Change
- Collaborative Governance Initiative
- Communities for Healthy Kids
- Intergovernmental Conflict Resolution
- Healthy Neighborhoods
- Land Use & Environment
- Local Government 101
- Public Service Ethics

For More on SB 375:

Visit www.ca-ilg.org/sb375 for links, analysis and additional information, including:

- California State Association of Counties Summary: www.counties.csac.org
- League of California Cities Analysis: www.cacities.org



Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Coordinated Regional and Local Planning for Housing and Transportation

SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) directs the California Air Resources Board to set regional targets for reducing greenhouse gas emission. The new law establishes a "bottom up" approach to ensure that cities and counties are involved in the development of regional plans to achieve those targets.

SB 375 builds on the existing framework of regional planning to tie together the regional allocation of housing needs and regional transportation planning in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from motor vehicle trips.

What is SB 375?

AB 32, California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, gives the California Air Resources Board authority over sources of greenhouse gas emissions, including cars and light trucks. According to the California Air Resources Board, transportation accounts for some 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, with cars and light trucks accounting for almost three-quarters of those emissions (30 percent overall).

SB 375, authored by Senator Darrell Steinberg, directs the Air Resources Board to set regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Aligning these regional plans is intended to help California achieve GHG reduction goals for cars and light trucks under AB 32, the state's landmark climate change legislation.

Because the existing regional transportation planning and housing allocation processes are overseen by local elected officials selected by their peers to serve on regional agency boards, the law is intended to ensure that cities and counties are closely involved in developing an effective plan for the region to achieve the targets.

To increase public participation and local government input, the law strengthens several existing requirements for public involvement in regional planning. The new law establishes a collaborative process between regional and state agencies to set regional GHG reduction targets, and provides CEQA incentives for development projects that are consistent with a regional plan that meets those targets. Cities and counties maintain their existing authority over local planning and land use decisions.

SB 375 Has Three Major Components:

1. Using the regional transportation planning process to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions consistent with AB 32's goals;
2. Offering California Environmental Quality Act incentives to encourage projects that are consistent with a regional plan that achieves greenhouse gas emission reductions; and
3. Coordinating the regional housing needs allocation process with the regional transportation process while maintaining local authority over land use decisions.

How Will SB 375 work?

1. SB 375 sets up a collaborative process between metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and the ARB to establish greenhouse gas emissions targets for each region in the state. A Regional Targets Advisory Committee including city and county officials is advising ARB on the targets.
2. SB 375 requires each MPO to include a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" in the regional transportation plan that demonstrates how the region will meet the greenhouse gas emission targets. If the sustainable communities strategy falls short of meeting the targets, the region must prepare an "alternative planning strategy" that, if implemented, would meet the targets.
3. SB 375 requires that decisions relating to the allocation of transportation funding be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy.



4. SB 375 creates California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining incentives for projects that are consistent with the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy (or the Alternative Planning Strategy if one is required.)
5. SB 375 changes housing element law to synchronize the schedule and develop common land use assumptions for regional housing and transportation planning.
6. SB 375 strengthens the existing requirements for input by the public and local officials into the development and review of MPO plans.

SB 375, General Plans and Local Land Use

Local officials will be key decision-makers in how the provisions of SB 375 are ultimately implemented.

While the Air Resources Board is responsible for setting region-wide greenhouse gas emission targets for each MPO in the state, each MPO will be responsible for developing its own sustainable communities strategy (and alternative planning strategy if necessary). MPOs are governed by local elected officials.

Neither the "sustainable communities strategy" nor the "alternative planning strategy" will supersede a city's or county's general plan or other planning policies or authorities. Nor must a local agency's planning policies be consistent with either strategy.

Rather, these strategies provide a basis for determining eligibility of residential development or transportation projects for SB 375's CEQA streamlining incentives, if cities or counties choose to offer them.

More About Sustainable Communities Strategies

The sustainable communities strategy is a growth strategy for the region which, in combination with transportation policies and programs, strives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and, if it is feasible, help meet ARB's targets for the region.

Specifically, a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) will:

- Identify the general location of uses, residential densities, and building intensities within the region;
- Identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region, including all economic segments of the population, over the course of the planning period of the regional transportation plan;
- Identify areas within the region sufficient to house an eight-year projection of the regional housing need for the region;
- Identify a transportation network to service the transportation needs of the region;
- Gather and consider the best practically available scientific information regarding resource areas and farmland in the region; and
- Quantify the reductions in GHG emissions the SCS is projected to achieve and any shortfall in reaching the regional target.

It is important to emphasize that this development pattern must comply with federal law, which requires that any pattern be based upon "current planning assumptions" that include the information in local general plans and sphere of influence boundaries.

If the sustainable communities strategy will not achieve the region's greenhouse gas reduction target, the region must also prepare a separate document called the "alternative planning strategy." Projects consistent with this strategy also qualify for CEQA incentives.

Source: California State Association of Counties Summary of SB 375